

Christmas 2020



Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and your loved ones are all safe and well. If you have been or are still poorly or your loved ones have been or are still poorly – we send you our most caring thoughts. To anyone who has suffered the loss of a loved one or a friend we send you our most sincere and heartfelt sympathy. As a school we are all too aware of the many challenges you are all facing – and indeed we face them with you. I want to thank you all for your support of the school this term.

In spite of the many difficulties everyone is facing you have provided remarkable support for our school and been very understanding. Thank you so much for your patience when all of the additional safety measures make life difficult and thank you for being so kind when things might not go to plan from time to time. All of your generosity, kindness and support is very much noticed and appreciated. Thank you very much from everyone at the school.

This newsletter provides you with some updates and important information you might find useful.

School Mission Statement

At St Chad's we are part of God's family:

We learn from Jesus' teachings in the Gospels
We love Jesus and each other with all our hearts
We show kindness to everyone just like Jesus did
'Christ in our heads, our hearts and our hands'





If you have more than one child in our school – we are changing drop off and pick up arrangements to help you

Back in the summer when schools were asked to introduce staggered drop-offs and pick-ups we didn't really expect to still be needing to have such arrangements in place for the start of 2021. Sadly, this is still going to be the case for the foreseeable future and we want to adapt our arrangements to help parents and also ensure children are not missing out on valuable learning time.

From the start of next term, if you have more than one child in school, you can drop them all off at the **earliest start time** and you can pick them all up at the **latest finish time**. We have reviewed our staffing arrangements and rotas and this means we can safely look after the small number of children who need to come into school early and stay a little later to wait for their siblings in other classes.

Please note these arrangements can only be provided if you have more than one child in school in order to help you as parents and save children from missing learning by arriving late / leaving early with siblings. If you have one child with us – they are already receiving their full teaching time allocation by starting and finishing with their whole class.

For example, if you have a child in Reception class and a child in Year 6 you can drop both children off at 8.30am (the start time of your Year 6 child) and you can pick them both up at 3.15pm (the finish time of your Reception child).

A reminder of the start and finish times for each class:

Year group	Start time	Finish Time
Reception	9.15am	3.15pm
Year 1	9.00am	3.00pm
Year 2	8.45am	2.45pm
Year 3	8.45am	2.45pm
Year 4	9.00am	3.00pm
Year 5	8.30am	2.30pm
Year 6	8.30am	2.30pm

Children break up Thursday 17th December at their normal finish time

Thank you for your cooperation with the early break up for Christmas. It was announced at very short notice but this is because the announcement from the government was only made recently in response to the evolving virus situation. The overriding aim of the directors is to protect everyone's health and safety, minimise risk and give everyone in the community the best prospect of a safe and happy Christmas.





Important information about what to do if your child tests positive in the holidays

Letting the school know about positive test results is really important **at the start of the Christmas holidays** as other children and staff may need to self-isolate due to being contacts. This is based on being in contact with someone who has tested positive any time up to 48 hours before their symptoms began or in the case of a person without symptoms – being in contact 48 hours before their test was taken. The following guidance has been produced by Dudley Public Health to help you identify when you need to contact the school over the holidays and when the school will contact you:

Positive test results



- Please tell the school about a positive test result for your child where their **symptoms started on or before Saturday 19th December** (regardless of when the test is taken).
- Please tell the school about a positive test result for your child **where the test date was on or before Saturday 19th December and your child didn't have any symptoms.**

When telling the school about positive test results please provide the following information:

- The date **symptoms started** (or if there were no symptoms).
- The date the **test was taken** (not the date you received the result).
- The date your child's **self-isolation ends**.



Please contact the school as soon as possible when you receive the positive test result by email to info@st-chads.dudley.sch.uk, heading the email POSTIIVE COVID TEST

If your child's symptoms start any time from Sunday 20th December there is no need to inform the school. If your child is without symptoms but tests positive any time **from** Sunday 20th December there is no need to inform the school. This is because the children's last date in school was Thursday 17th December and Saturday 19th December (midnight on Saturday night) marks the end of the 48 hour period since they were last in school.

For example:

- Your child develops symptoms on Saturday 19th December, takes a test on Sunday 20th December and receives a positive result on Tuesday 22nd December. **Please tell the school as soon as possible.**
- Your child develops symptoms on Sunday 20th December, takes a test on Monday 21st December and receives a positive result on Wednesday 23rd December. **There is no need to inform the school.**
- Your child has no symptoms but takes a test on Saturday 19th December and receives a positive result on Monday 21st December. **Please tell the school as soon as possible.**
- Your child has no symptoms but takes a test on Sunday 20th December and receives a positive result on Monday 21st December. **There is no need to inform the school.**

Contacts of positive cases

- The school will identify any pupils who are contacts of a positive case.
- The school will notify you that your child is a contact and your child must self-isolate (stay at home) for 10 days from the day after exposure. The school will confirm the date isolation ends with you.
- Other household members don't need to self-isolate, unless your child goes on to develop symptoms of COVID-19.

We know that self-isolating can be difficult and may feel especially difficult for children and families during the holidays. However, this is a really important part of helping to stop the spread of COVID-19 and protecting your loved ones. Help is available to those who are self-isolating, may be feeling lonely or isolated, are unable to leave their home, or struggling financially due to the pandemic. You can call 0300 3302 152 from Monday to Friday between 9.30am and 12.30pm.



If your child is going to be absent at the start of term, please let us know. Once term begins, please then continue to tell the school (7 days a week) about any positive test results or self-isolation straight away.

Christmas Masses in Church

The capacity of the Church is severely limited at the moment due to social distancing requirements. This means the capacity for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses is much, much smaller than normal. Sadly, entry to Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses will be by ticket only as Father cannot risk breaking capacity rules and violating Coronavirus legislation. If you intend going to Mass on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day you need to collect a ticket from a Church Warden. Please don't arrive at Church without tickets. Father asks that you understand the situation this year and like all of us is deeply sorry that Christmas cannot be celebrated as normal.

Schoolcomms



Apart from the inevitable teething problems, our new communication system seems to be working well and we are now able to communicate much more effectively than with the previous system. If you haven't yet downloaded the app, please do so – it's so much better than the previous system!

Keep us up to date with your email address and mobile number. The system only works if we have your correct contact details! If Father Christmas brings you a new phone or you change your email address – please remember to let the school know! That way we can ensure you receive all of our emails, alerts and messages!

- Search for "School Gateway" in the Apple App Store/Google Play or on your phone. Go to www.schoolgateway.com/apple (Apple) or www.schoolgateway.com/android (Android).
- Install the app and if you are asked then say yes to "Allow Push Notifications"
- When you launch School Gateway for the first time, please select 'New User' and enter the email address and mobile telephone number you have registered with school.
- The system will send a PIN code to your phone; please enter this PIN code and the app will be activated for you.

Year 4 First Holy Communion and Year 6 Confirmation

Both of these Sacramental Masses could not go ahead due to the second lockdown. Please be reassured they will be rearranged. We are now looking towards arranging both Masses for sometime after Easter. We are worried that if we organise them for the Winter or early Spring they may end up being cancelled again if there are new restrictions announced. At the moment, everything is pointing towards brighter, more normal times after Easter. We will be in touch soon after Christmas to provide dates. Thanks for your patience and understanding.

Year 3 First Holy Communion

We will also be in touch with a date for Year 3 First Holy Communion soon after the holidays. This will likely take place in the Summer at around the normal time in June, on a Saturday morning as was planned for this year.





Free School Meals Eligibility

If you think you are eligible for free school meals we urge you to apply. We have an onsite kitchen where all our food is freshly prepared and the daily menu always offers a hot main course as well as sandwiches and jacket potatoes. What's even better is that children pre-order their meals in the morning with their teacher or you can even order them online at home! This means your child will always get the meal of their choice.

As well as saving you time and money – if you apply for free school meals and you are eligible – the school will receive precious 'pupil premium funding' for up to six years. I cannot begin to tell you how precious and important this funding is for our school. Your child doesn't even have to take the free school meal if you choose not to – simply by successfully applying you will secure the pupil premium funding for the school. It's really important that as a school we receive the funding we need to help the children with their learning. Please, please apply if you think you might even possibly be eligible.

Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2

ALL children in these classes are able to receive a FREE school meal every day. This saves you time and money and is a benefit provided for all young children. Please take up this offer and make the most of the benefit you are entitled to.

Everyone in these year groups receives free lunches – but if you meet the eligibility criteria below – please can we ask you ALSO to make an application? This is the ONLY way we can access pupil premium funding for your child – which will then be paid to your child's school for the next 6 years.

Only a tiny number of parents who are eligible have applied – if everyone eligible was to apply the school would receive thousands of pounds of precious extra funding – meaning we could spend that on improving the provision for the children.

Eligibility Criteria

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit Run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit


If you wish to apply for Free School Meals, please go to

www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/your-council/council-tax-and-benefits/benefits/free-school-meals

If you need further information, you can contact the Free School Meals Team by:

 Telephone -01384 814988

 Email – freeschoolmeals.benefits@dudley.gov.uk

 Visiting – Dudley Council Plus, Castle Street, Dudley
between 8.30am and 5pm Monday to Friday, 9am and 12 noon Saturday





Parent View



Last academic year I was quite overwhelmed by the huge number of positive reviews placed on Parent View around the time of the school's Ofsted inspection. It was very good for me to know that you'd noticed some positive changes in that short time since I started with you.

Unfortunately – Parent View archives all of the responses at the end of the academic year and now we are back to zero responses! Please could I invite you to leave a review on Parent View for the school so that both Ofsted and the school can gather your views. We will also be sending out a Parent Questionnaire in the new year as well, just like last year's which included so many of the changes we have already introduced.

All I would ever ask is that if there is something you are unhappy about – please come and speak to me first. I take great pride in always trying to resolve issues and responding quickly to parents and carers. Please give us the opportunity to make things better by letting us know.

You can submit your Parent View responses at www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk and our postcode is DY3 3UE. Thanks very much indeed for your time and support.

CAFOD Thank you for your generous charitable donations to CAFOD on CAFOD Harvest Fast Day

We collected a total of £221.72 which has been sent to CAFOD's Harvest Fast Day appeal to help provide clean water for handwashing and drinking in some of the most needy communities around the world. Thank you very much.

Thank you for your donations of tins of food for the Good Shepherd Shelter

We collected a lot of food as you can see from the photo. This will all be sent to the Good Shepherd Shelter in Wolverhampton and will help provide meals for the homeless and poor this winter. Thank you for your generosity towards the most needy in our own community.

Thank you for your generous support of our school fund. Your generosity is VERY much appreciated and VERY valuable to the school

So far this term we have received extremely generous donations on Schoolcomms totalling £823.22. This is very kind of you indeed and much appreciated. Every penny of this money will be spent on extras for the children.

We also received donations for school fund on Christmas Jumper Day totalling £85.00. Thank you again for your generosity. There is never any obligation or expectation of you to donate and you must never feel under any pressure. At the same time, every donation, no matter how small makes a difference.

St Chad's does not benefit from lots of funding and your kindness makes it possible to do more for the children. Thank you very much indeed.





Thank you for helping your children to make their 'bambinelli'

We received an amazing response to this Diocesan and indeed worldwide Advent practice. The tiny models of baby Jesus were so wonderful to see at this time and each class celebrated a special service of blessing over the bambinelli. Here is the prayer we used that you and your family might like to use with your own nativity scenes or indeed the bambinelli your child created!

*God our Father,
You loved us so much you sent us your only Son, Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary,
to save us and lead us back to you.*

*We pray that, with your blessing, these images of Jesus might be a sign of your
presence and love in our homes.*

*Good Father, give your blessing to all who gather with us this Christmas, our family and friends.
Open our hearts, that we might receive Jesus in joy, do always what he asks of us, and see him in
those who need our love.*

*We ask this in the name of Jesus, your beloved Son, who came to give peace to the world.
You, who live and reign forever and ever.*

Amen



A Christmas Message from Archbishop Bernard

His Grace has recorded a short Christmas message for schools to be shared with the children, staff and all their families. The children have seen it in school and we encourage you to enjoy the message as a family, too. It is only a couple of minutes long and was recorded at our beautiful Cathedral, St Chad's, in Birmingham City Centre. The YouTube link is: <https://youtu.be/IYVkuU9cYa38>.





Merry Christmas



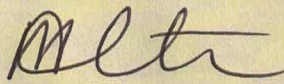
Keep in Touch

Your parental satisfaction and the progress, safety and happiness of your child is the top priority for the school. We try hard to do the best we can in all areas but we know that things can and sometimes do go wrong. What is important is the way these problems are sorted out. Never, ever hesitate to get in touch for help with any matter however small it may seem. You can speak to staff on the door in the morning or you can call the office. Teachers will always call you back and Mr Hinton or Mrs Chapman can usually speak to you straight away. If for any reason we can't get to you immediately we will always ring you back as soon as we possibly can. Never hesitate to make contact – most things can be resolved and the sooner we know about your concerns – the sooner we can address them.

Wishing you and your loved ones a safe and happy Christmas

Thank you once again for all of your kindness, generosity, patience and support. It's an honour for everyone in the school to serve you. We know how lucky we are to serve such a wonderful, kind and supportive community and we are grateful to you. Have a very Happy Christmas and we pray for a brighter, safer and less stressful time for the entire world in 2021. Take care.

With every kind wish as always,



Mr M Hinton
Executive Principal

